

## **Now there are four — MARSOC joins SOCOM ranks**

By Tech. Sgt. Jim Moser  
USSOCOM Public Affairs

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The Marine Corps officially joined its sister Services in the ranks of U.S. Special Operations Command during an activation ceremony at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 24.

The event officiated by Brig. Gen. Dennis Hejlik, commander, Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, drew among others, the attendance of the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Michael Hagee and Gen. Doug Brown, USSOCOM commander.

"This activation is a milestone," Rumsfeld said. "It pairs two of history's most dedicated groups of warriors — the men and women of the U.S. Special Operations Command and the U. S. Marine Corps."

When MARSOC is fully constituted in 2010, it will add 2,600 Marines and Sailors to wage the war on terrorism. But according to Hagee, MARSOC will be in the fight much sooner.

"We are going to increase the capabilities and capacity of special operations command in three major areas," he said. "The Foreign Military Training Unit, which will ultimately have 22 teams, increasing foreign internal defense capacity. USSOCOM will deploy three of these teams in April." MARSOC also adds a logistics capability, which will increase intelligence for USSOCOM and add a Marine Special Forces Company that will supply maritime raid capabilities off of amphibious decks. The first of those companies will deploy the end of this year.

"We are in a long war facing a global enemy that has openly stated their intention to obtain weapons of mass destruction and take lives of innocent Americans and our allies," Brown said. "Our special operations Marines will add important capabilities and capacities to the long-term fight. As we build a world that is inhospitable to terrorist — MARSOC forces ... are a powerful, robust and welcome addition (to SOCOM)."

MARSOC is headquartered at Camp Lejeune with subordinate units at Lejeune and Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Along with senators and generals, four very special guests attended the ceremony. Four members of the 1st Marine Raider Regiment were present and accounted for.

"This activation is a milestone in Marine Corps history, but it is really not unprecedented," Hagee said. "Some 46 years ago the commandant at that time, Lt. Gen. Thomas Holkum, stood up the 1st Marine Raider Battalion. These were special commandos trained to go deep into Japanese defenses ... they are a very important part of Marine Corps history."

Steeped in tradition and grounded in history, MARSOC makes the Fourth Horseman in the terrorist's apocalypse.

"Today is about change and doing what is right and what is smart," Brown said. "Two organizations of tremendous capability, two organizations of legendary warriors, two organizations in transition prepared to meet the threats of today's unique and different battlefields, two organizations who have routinely work side by side on the battlefields of the world today become even more capable as SOCOM stands up its fourth component the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command."



***Sgt. Maj. Matthew Ingram and Brig. Gen. Dennis Hejlik, commander, Marine Corps Forces Special Operation Command, unfurl the colors at the MARSOC activation ceremony Feb. 24 at Camp Lejeune, N.C. Photos by Tech. Sgt. Jim Moser.***